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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY**

**OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES**

**25 January 1952**

**STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 183**

**SUBJECT : G-2 Estimate of Chinese Communist Capability to Support  
An Invasion of Southeast Asia**

**REFERENCE: G-2 Memo for AD/ONE, "Chinese Communist Capabilities  
against Indochina," 17 January 1952**

1. NIE-55, dated 7 December 51, gave the Chinese Communists the capability to support logistically approximately 100,000 men in an invasion of Indochina and 50,000 in an invasion of Burma. The Chinese Communists were not given the capability to support logistically such ground operations in Burma and Indochina concurrently as long as the Korean war continued. NIE-35, published in June, 1951, also contained the G-2 estimate that the Chinese Communists could support 100,000 men in an invasion of Indochina.

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2. On 4 January 1952, [redacted]  
[redacted] queried this estimate of Chinese Communist capability. [redacted]

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3. In response [redacted] ONE queried G-2 on 10 January 1952. G-2 replied in a memorandum of 17 January 1952 that the Chinese Communists now had the capability to support logistically 150,000 troops for an invasion of Indochina, and 50,000 troops for an invasion of Burma, and that such operations could be conducted concurrently even though Korean operations on the present or an intensified scale continued.

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4. To determine the reason for this rather substantial increase in estimated capability, [redacted] interviewed Col. Duesenberry, Lt. Col. Bailey and Capt. McMillan of G-2, Eastern Branch. The substance of this discussion follows:

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a. G-2 stated that they were presently completing their contribution for NIE-35/1, and that this document would present in detail such documentary evidence as G-2 had in support of their new estimate. This contribution is due in ONE, Monday, 28 January.

b. G-2 stated that since December they have received information (1) of a significant improvement in the effectiveness, vigor, and coordination of recent Viet Minh attacks in Tonkin; (2) of an increase in Chinese Communist troop strength along the Indochina border; and (3) (most important in terms of the matter under discussion) of a substantial Chinese Communist logistical build-up and significant improvement in supply routes and facilities into Indochina, in particular the improvement of railroads leading south from Kwangsi Province to the Indochina border. 25X1

c. In addition, G-2 gave [redacted] a copy of a memo of a Pentagon conference of 14 January 1952 [redacted] 25X1

[redacted] Although Col. Duesenberry stated that the extremely pessimistic remarks [redacted] should be treated with reserve and that G-2 did not share the present "excitement" over the Indochina situation, [redacted] remarks clearly influenced G-2's new estimate of Chinese Communist capabilities. The key points of the [redacted] conference are as follows: 25X1

(1) [redacted] who had briefed US G-2 in November, 1951, had been justifiably optimistic. But later information on Chinese Communist aid in October indicated that this assistance had "suddenly" increased "by ten times that given previously -- this occurred all at once."

(2) There was an explanation in some detail of of improvements in south China supply routes and facilities.

(3) The build-up of supplies in Indochina was not far above the needs of the Viet Minh and was sufficient to supply "100,000 additional [troops] . . . for a period of two months."

(4) "150,000 Chinese Communists could enter Indochina in one month and 50,000 could enter in one to two weeks."

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6. Another reason for G-2's six-week change of line may stem from the fact that there has been a known gradual improvement in Communist capabilities in south China since June 1951, when G-2 prepared its contribution for NIE-55. G-2 did not take cognizance of this improvement in the preparation of NIE-55 (November-December 1951), and may have taken the present occasion to revise their existing estimate, which in fact dates back to June, 1951.

7. We believe that the revised G-2 estimate more accurately reflects current Chinese Communist capabilities than did the one presented in NIE-55.

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